

## Psalm 84

# Passion for, Pilgrimage to, and Prayer in the House of God

(For the choir director; on the Gittith. A Psalm of the sons of Korah.<sup>1</sup>)

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### A1 THE PSALMIST'S PASSION <sup>2</sup> FOR THE HOUSE OF YAHWEH OF TROOPS 84:1-4

**B1 The Beauty of the Dwelling of Yahweh of Troops:** {1} How lovely are Your dwelling places, O LORD of hosts! <sup>3</sup> 84:1

**B2 The Psalmist's Yearning for the Courts of Yahweh 84:2**

C1 {2} My soul longed and even yearned for the courts of the LORD;

C2 My heart and my flesh sing for joy to the living God.

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<sup>1</sup> Superscription - Sons of Korah: The writer is an unnamed member of the "Sons of Korah" (see note on *Korah* in Psalm 42) who was away from the house of God, but deeply appreciative of it as the residence of God in Zion. He travels to the house of God in Zion and therein worships God, for whose anointed representative king he also prays. Ryrie (*RSB*), in his note on Psalm 42 says that the twelve psalms bearing the superscription "Sons of Korah" were dedicated to them, implying they were not written by them. In his discussion of the authorship of Psalms, however, he attributes twelve psalms to the sons of Korah. In the superscriptions, the *lamedh* preceding the word sons (of Korah) might, indeed, be appropriately translated "to" (the sons of Korah). There are, however, at least 73 psalms that bear David's name as the author, and *lamedh* precedes his name in each of these. The *lamedh*, therefore, in and of itself, cannot exclude the Sons of Korah as authors and dictate that they are mere dedicatees or collectors of the psalms. If the sons of Korah are the authors of these psalms, it need not be maintained that all the sons of Korah wrote each psalm, but only that one of them at a time, unnamed, did so, and the sons of Korah were collectively viewed as the author.

The provenance of this psalm is unknown. Keil and Delitzsch argue that the pro-David author was, like David, exiled from Jerusalem, probably during Absalom's coup. But the text itself does not say so, and it cannot be proven. What seems fairly certain is that the psalmist desires the house of God, travels to the house of God, and worships in the house of God (borrowing from Allen P. Ross, *TBKC*).

<sup>2</sup> PASSION (Subtitle): Passion, Pilgrimage, and Praise, incorporated into the three subtitles, are borrowed from Charles Ryrie (*Ryrie Study Bible*).

<sup>3</sup> 84:1, 3, 8, 12 - LORD (God) of hosts: Hosts refers to armies or troops, probably God's armies of angels. It may seem strange for the psalmist to address God as Yahweh of Troops when he is longing to appear before God in His sanctuary. But the connection lies in this, that unless Yahweh mounts a strong military presence, the nation will be overwhelmed with foes, and worship in the sanctuary will be impossible. Thus the prayer on behalf of Yahweh's anointed human King, who is a shield (84:9), and the acknowledgment that Yahweh Elohim is Himself a shield (84:11), without whose presence no earthly shield can be effective.

**B3 The Envious Position of Those Who Dwell in Yahweh's House 84:3-4**

C1 The Bird Raising Its Family 84:3

D1 The humble nature of the purpose

E1 A home: {3} The bird also has found a house,

E2 A nursery: And the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young,

D2 The grandeur of the site

E1 The altars of Yahweh of Troops! Even Your altars, O LORD of hosts,

E2 The psalmist's king and God! My King and my God.

C2 The Praising Priests 84:4

D1 Their blessedness: {4} How blessed are those who dwell in Your house!

D2 Their continual praise: They are ever praising You. Selah.

**A2 THE PSALMIST'S PILGRIMAGE TO WORSHIP ELOHIM IN ZION 84:5-7**

**B1 He is Blessed, for his Strength is in Elohim: {5} How blessed is the man whose strength is in You, 84:5a**

**B2 His Heart Desires to Travel to the House of Elohim: In whose heart are the highways to Zion! 84:5b**

**B3 He and Other Pilgrims are Blessed as They Travel to the House of Elohim 84:6**

C1 The dry place (Baca) becomes a spring: {6} Passing through the valley of Baca they make it a spring;

C2 They are Blessed with Rain: The early rain also covers it with blessings.

**B4 He and Other Pilgrims are Strengthened as They Arrive Successfully in Zion 84:7**

C1 {7} They go from strength to strength,

C2 *Every one of them* appears before God in Zion.

**A3 THE PSALMIST'S PRAYER TO YAHWEH ELOHIM OF TROOPS IN HIS HOUSE 84:8-12**

**B1 His Prayer to Yahweh Elohim of Troops on Behalf of Israel's Anointed King 84:8-9**

C1 His Address Requesting a Hearing 84:8

D1 From Yahweh, Elohim of Troops: *{8}* O LORD God of hosts, hear my prayer;

D2 From Elohim of Jacob: Give ear, O God of Jacob! Selah.

C2 His Request for Elohim to Look Favorably upon Israel's Protection -- Elohim's Anointed Representative 84:9

D1 Upon Israel's protective shield: *{9}* Behold our shield, O God,

D2 Upon Elohim's anointed king: And look upon the face of Your anointed.

**B2 Because Elohim's Favor upon the King is Essential to Access to the House of God and to Protection and Providence from Yahweh 84:10-12**

C1 Because Only Elohim's Favor upon the King Can Provide the Psalmist the Access to Worship in the House of God Which He Craves 84:10

D1 The psalmist's preference to quality time in Elohim's presence: *{10}* For a day in Your courts is better than a thousand *outside*.

D2 The psalmist's preference in regard to comfort in Elohim's presence:

E1 Existing in discomfort in Elohim's house is preferable: I would rather stand at the threshold of the house of my God

E2 To dwelling in comfort in wickedness; Than dwell in the tents of wickedness.

C2 Because Yahweh Elohim is Providence Personified 84:11

D1 He is light and protection: *{11}* For the LORD God is a sun and shield;

D2 He gives grace and glory: The LORD gives grace and glory;

D3 He provides all necessary good for the upright: No good thing does He withhold from those who walk uprightly.

C3 The Man Who Trusts in Yahweh of Troops is Truly Blessed! 84:12

D1 {12} O LORD of hosts,<sup>4</sup>

D2 How blessed is the man who trusts in You!

Expanded Analysis of Psalm 84

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<sup>4</sup> 84:12 - LORD of hosts: The word hosts is a little-known military word. It translates the Heb. tsebaoth, which means armies or troops. It refers to Yahweh's heavenly army of angels. I have translated the phrase "Yahweh of Troops."